

# **EXHIBIT 14**

# 'Button' Bends Time Into Grand Fable

Animation fires up war documentary 'Bashir'; ride of 'Valkyrie' builds to thrills



Brad Pitt ages in a unique way in 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.'

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

*By Joe Morgenstern*

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If time flowed backward for me as it does for Brad Pitt in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," I would have been almost three hours younger by the time the end credits rolled around. No such luck on that score, but David Fincher's majestic fantasy left me happier than I could have imagined I'd be. Eric Roth's screenplay, inspired by a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, turns on a single device. A baby is born old -- not just old but downright senescent -- and youthens as he grows. Yet the film, which co-stars Cate Blanchett, quickly outgrows any sense of gimmickry and matures into a one-of-a-kind meditation on mortality, time's inexorable passage and the fleeting sweetness of love.

Time is of the essence in more ways than one. The production takes its time, and uses it wisely, in tracking Benjamin's development from an ugly incubus through a teenage codger to a middle-aged 26-year-old who's certainly spry but still too old for Ms. Blanchett's Daisy. She is Ben's contemporary, a friend from their New Orleans childhood who's become an impossibly ravishing ballet dancer. Not until he grows 15 years younger and she grows 15 years older, however, are they right for each other physically as well as spiritually. "My God," Daisy says at one point in their mid-40s, "look at you -- you're perfect." It's a charming laugh line, since he has finally emerged as a fully recognizable Brad Pitt. And what a remarkable presence the actor is, not just during that golden era but before and after, when he has only his voice and eyes with which to fashion Ben's character while the wonders of digital technology and age-confounding makeup provide his body and face.

It's a great performance by any measure, but let me count some of the other ways that Mr. Fincher's film is remarkable. Ms. Blanchett's performance, to be sure; she's breathtaking in a long red dress, dancing in a fog-shrouded gazebo; otherwise she's simply dazzling, and deeply affecting. A supporting cast that includes Tilda Swinton, Taraji P. Henson, Jason Flemyng and Jared Harris. Alexandre Desplat's score, as exquisite and evocative as the Scott Joplin concert waltz woven through it. Claudio Miranda's sumptuous cinematography, Donald Graham Burt's art direction and production design, and Jacqueline West's costumes. "Benjamin Button" is all of a visionary piece, and it's a soul-filling vision.

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